

Message

ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY REPORT

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Report Highlights

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Highlights

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IF YOU MISSED IT: THIS WEEK AT THE AGENCIES

[Internal Watchdog Finds Glitches in EPA's Travel Card Program](#)

By Stephen Lee

The EPA doesn't have a firm handle on illegal and improper purchases on employees' travel cards, the agency's Office of Inspector General said in a Sept. 19 report.

[Top Energy Secretary Aide Leaves, Replaced With Perry Ally](#)

By Ari Natter

Energy Secretary Rick Perry's chief of staff has left his position and will be replaced by a long-time Perry ally, according to three people familiar with the matter.

NOAA Sued for 'Stonewalling' Over FOIA Requests

By Stephen Lee

An environmental group is suing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for failing to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request about Freedom of Information Act requests.

EPA's Wheeler Faces Tough House Crowd After California Curbs (1)

By Stephen Lee

The EPA won't wait for a review by its science advisers before forging ahead with its effort to strip California of its ability to limit greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Andrew Wheeler told skeptical lawmakers Sept. 19.

Trump's Parting Jab at San Francisco Puts EPA In Uncharted Water

By Josh Wingrove, Romy Varghese and Jennifer A. Dlouhy

Donald Trump's declaration that San Francisco had committed environmental violations by allowing trash produced by its homeless population to enter the ocean outraged California lawmakers and appeared to take the EPA by surprise.

THIS WEEK IN CLIMATE

States' Lawsuit Adds Uncertainty to Clean Cars Clash

By Ellen M. Gilmer

A new lawsuit targeting the Trump administration's decision to cut off California's authority to set auto emissions standards complicates an already-messy legal conflict.

California Sues U.S. to Regain Power Over Auto Emissions (1)

By Andrew Harris, Ryan Beene and Jennifer A. Dlouhy

California is asking a federal court to prevent President Donald Trump from stripping the state of its power to set limits on auto emissions of greenhouse gases that are stricter than those of the national government and encourage more electric-vehicle use.

California Thumbs Nose at Trump in Fuel Economy Fight (1)

By Emily C. Dooley

As the Trump administration works to gut California's right to regulate fuel efficiency standards, the state's top air pollution regulatory board Sept. 19 approved plans to set its own standards with automakers Ford, Honda, BMW, and Volkswagen.

EPA Slams California's Air Quality as It Curbs State's Authority (1)

By Ryan Beene and Jennifer A. Dlouhy

The Trump administration moved to strip California of its authority to limit greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, even as it warned the state it needs to do more to combat smog.

FERC Systematically Scrubbing Climate Change From Orders: Glick

By Catherine Traywick

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission "appears to be systematically scrubbing climate change from our orders," Democratic Commissioner Rich Glick said at the agency's monthly meeting Sept. 19.

D.C. Circuit Scraps Clean Power Plan Litigation

By Ellen M. Gilmer

Major unresolved litigation targeting the Obama-era Clean Power Plan is dead.

Major Unions Side With EPA in Power Rule Repeal Challenge

By Porter Wells

A group of unions are backing the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to repeal the Clean Power Plan, telling the D.C. Circuit their members' jobs, wages, and benefits will suffer without the rollback of the plan.

Climate Change Costs Billions in Human Health, Researchers Say (1)

By Stephen Lee

Climate change damages human health to the tune of billions of dollars every year, researchers said Sept. 18.

Carbon Removal Firm Doubles Size of Proposed U.S. Plant (1)

By James Munson

A Canadian company seeking to suck carbon dioxide directly out of the atmosphere is expanding plans for its first plant—to be built in the Permian Basin straddling Texas and New Mexico—and aiming for an earlier construction date.

India Won't Tighten Climate Goals Without Financial Help

By Lou Del Bello

India won't raise its climate ambitions at the upcoming United Nations Climate Action Summit, the government announced.

THIS WEEK IN ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Federal Oil Well Bonds Won't Cover Cleanup Costs, GAO Says (1)

By Bobby Magill

Some oil and gas wells on federal land may be insufficiently bonded to cover reclamation costs, possibly leaving the Bureau of Land Management with a \$46 million cleanup bill, the Government Accountability Office said.

Trees in Grand Staircase-Escalante Win Interior Reprieve

By Tripp Baltz

A plan by the Interior Department to remove about 30,000 acres of pinyon pine and juniper woodlands from Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument has been halted, for now.

Dominion Wants to Build America's Largest Offshore Wind Project

By Andrew M. Ballard (Bloomberg Environment)

Dominion Energy has taken a significant step in its plans to build commercial-scale offshore wind turbines.

Duke Energy Pledges to Be Carbon Neutral by 2050

By Christopher Martin

Duke Energy Corp. agreed to eliminate carbon emissions from its power plants and offset those that it can't by 2050, joining a slew of power producers taking steps to limit the effects of global warming.

40-Year-Old Law That Spurred U.S. Renewables Growth Gets Revamp

By Stephen Cunningham

A 40-year-old law that's been key to the growth of renewable energy in the U.S. is set for a major overhaul that could change the way small solar and wind projects are developed.

Appalachia Finds Success With Obama-Era Mine Cleanup Program

By Stephen Lee

An Obama-era program to test whether old coal mines can be turned into economic and cultural engines is delivering strong results, according to Appalachian groups.

THIS WEEK IN AIR, WATER AND WASTE

Sterigenics Gets Permit, Prepares to Reopen Illinois Plant (1)

By Stephen Joyce and Chris Marr

Illinois House Republican Leader Jim Durkin vowed to continue pushing for new legislation to keep a Sterigenics U.S. LLC facility shuttered after the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Sept. 20 approved a permit that paves the way for the plant to reopen.

Diesel Trucks to Get Smog Checks in California

By Emily C. Dooley

Large diesel trucks operating in California will have to undergo emissions tests similar to those required for cars.

Appeals Court Will Decide Ozone Pollution Case Without Arguments

By Amena H. Saiyid

A federal appeals court has decided against hearing directly from the parties involved in a lawsuit over EPA regulation of upwind sources of ozone-forming pollution.

Temporary Return to Federal Waters Rule Has Left, Right Wary

By David Schultz

The Trump administration's timing on a landmark water pollution measure may displease both liberals and conservatives by temporarily reinstating older, obsolete water regulations.

Feds Can Bring Criminal Charges Under Clean Air Act, Judge Says

By Porter Wells

The president of an oil and gas waste processing facility failed to convince a federal judge in Montana that the government can't use the Clean Air Act's general duty clause to pursue criminal charges against him.

Feds Seek Face Time With Supreme Court in Superfund Showdown

By Sylvia Carignan and Ellen M. Gilmer

The federal government is asking the U.S. Supreme Court for the chance to argue on behalf of Atlantic Richfield Co. in a Superfund case centering on the cleanup of smelter waste in Anaconda, Mont.

EPA Could Rewrite Cross-State Pollution Rule, It Tells Court (2)

By Amena H. Saiyid

A federal appeals court is indefinitely delaying oral arguments in a lawsuit challenging an EPA regulation of upwind sources of ozone-forming pollution while the agency decides how to proceed in a related case.

Minnesota Court Halts Permits for PolyMet Copper, Nickel Mine (1)

By Stephen Joyce

PolyMet Mining Corp.'s push to construct Minnesota's first copper and nickel mine is on hold.

India Quashes Idea of Ban on Single-Use Plastics

By Lou Del Bello

Fresh details on the much-awaited measures against plastic pollution due to be announced in October suggest that India won't be banning single-use plastic after all.

THIS WEEK IN CHEMICALS

EPA Announces Plan to Curb Pesticide Testing on Birds

By Adam Allington

The EPA Sept. 17 unveiled a draft policy to reduce pesticide testing on birds.

Lawsuit Threat Aims to Make EPA Release Chemical Documents

(1)

By Pat Rizzuto

The EPA routinely fails to disclose many new chemical documents it is required to make public under the Toxic Substances Control Act, environmental and worker advocates charge.

Home Depot to Stop Selling Rugs and Carpets With PFAS (2)

By Pat Rizzuto

Home Depot Inc. will stop selling rugs and carpets containing a group of highly persistent chemicals, the company announced Sept. 17.

Grocery Chain Phasing PFAS, Other Chemicals Out of Packaging (2)

By Pat Rizzuto

Ahold Delhaize USA, the parent company for grocery chains including Food Lion, Giant Food, Peapod, and Stop & Shop, will no longer allow several chemicals to be used for its brands' packaging, it announced Sept. 19.

When Bayer Bought Monsanto, It Didn't See This Lawyer Coming

By Caroline Winter and Tim Loh

In July 2018, a baby-faced lawyer named R. Brent Wisner seized the opportunity to ask his legal opponent a question that had been bugging him. Through a series of accidents, Wisner had found himself co-leading a monumental case against Bayer AG, the German chemicals giant that had recently acquired Monsanto for \$63 billion. Two weeks into the heated courtroom battle, he felt fairly certain he was going to win big and inflict lasting damage on the company. So he wanted to know: Why on earth wasn't Bayer settling?

Arkansas Prepares 2020 Restrictions for Pesticide Dicamba

By Chris Marr

Arkansas will restrict farmers' use of the herbicide dicamba again during the 2020 summer growing season, under a draft rule headed to the governor for his approval.

Lawmakers Approve Flame Retardant Ban in Massachusetts

By Adrienne Appel

The Massachusetts Senate has approved a broad ban on flame retardants in household goods, setting the stage for a showdown on the issue with Gov. Charlie Baker (R).

Pesticide Residue Generally Safe on European Food, EU Agency Says

By Stephen Gardner

European Union legal limits on pesticide traces in food are unlikely to need revision even if the risks of pesticide residues are evaluated on a cumulative basis, according to two draft assessments from the European Food Safety Authority.

European Union To Prohibit Brain-Harming Pesticide Chlorpyrifos

By Stephen Gardner

The European Union is preparing to ban the pesticide chlorpyrifos and the related substance chlorpyrifos-methyl on the basis of their health risks, in particular for children.

EU Court Confirms BPA Endocrine Disruption Designation (1)

By Stephen Gardner

The European Chemicals Agency was right to designate the widely used chemical bisphenol A as an endocrine disruptor that could harm the human hormone system, the European Union's lower court ruled.

THIS WEEK IN INSIGHTS

INSIGHT: The Gig Economy Could Change How Employers Gear for Next Recession

The current gig economy—where 37% of U.S. workers do freelance work—makes planning for the next recession much different from the Great Recession of 2008. Lisa Hogan, chair of Brownstein's employment and labor group, says HR teams might have to flex their RIF muscles, but how businesses decide to restructure will be very different this time.



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